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ABSTRACT

This survey of California libraries was conducted to gather information on the use of the California Union List of Periodicals (CULP), a microfiche finding list for serials held in all kinds of libraries statewide, exept for those held by major academic institutions. Returned by 391 of 696 libraries in October 1980, the survey questionnaire was designed to identify the market for CULP, the ways in which CULP is used, the degree to which it is used, user priorities for improving CULP, and the other union serials lists libraries are using. The report summarizes the findings for each question. (FM)

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PN-77

# CULP

# (CALIFORNIA UNION LIST OF PERIODICALS)

## 1980 USER SURVEY RESULTS

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# CULP 1980 USER SURVEY RESULTS

## INTRODUCTION

CLASS (California Library Authority for Systems and Services) maintains a computer file and annually publishes a microfiche finding list for serials held in all kinds of California libraries except for those in major academic institutions. Holdings for the latter libraries are published in CALLS (California Academic Library List of Serials), produced by the University of California Division of Library Automation and distributed by CLASS.

The Fifth Edition of CULP was published in the spring of 1980, and represented a major improvement in the currency and accuracy of the title and holdings data. The Fifth Edition contained holdings for 549 libraries for 66,000 serials titles.

In October 1980 CLASS mailed a short questionnaire to all contributors to or purchasers of CULP. This questionnaire was similar to one mailed two years ago to CULP contributors, after publication of the Fourth Edition. The 1980 survey was designed to find out:

- Who is buying CULP?
- What is CULP being used for?
- How much use is being made of CULP?
- What are users' priorities for improving CULP?
- What other union serials lists are libraries using?

The universe of CULP participants and purchasers was divided into several different types of library. The response rate for each type is shown below:

| Type | Number of Quest. Mailed | Number of Responses | % Response |
|---|---|---|---|
| Public Libraries | 197 | 139 | 71% |
| Sci-Tech Libraries | 175 | 77 | 44% |
| Community Colleges | 87 | 45 | 52% |
| Academic-Graduate | 48 | 31 | 65% |
| Medical Libraries | 75 | 27 | 36% |
| Business Libraries | 27 | 23 | 85% |
| Other Special | 30 | 22 | 73% |
| Academic-Undergrad | 43 | 17 | 40% |
| Law Libraries | 14 | 6 | 43% |
| TOTALS | 696 | 391 | 56% |

Several additional responses were received but were not included in the analysis because of insufficient data or because they came in after analysis had been done. Responses from state library agencies and from reference or ILL centers were included in the Public Library category.

To perform the analysis, responses to each question were tallied and converted to a percentage of the total number responding for each library type. The percentages were then used to construct a scatter plot for each question to identify clusters and deviations in the responses. Findings for each question were:

QUESTION 1: Which edition(s) of CULP do you have?

91% of the public libraries responding had the Fifth Edition of CULP which was distributed early in 1980. This reflects the impact of the California State Library's Finding List Project which subsidized the purchase of the Fifth Edition by most California public libraries.

Only 1 out of 6 (17%) of the law libraries responding had purchased the Fifth Edition. The other five were using the Fourth Edition, published in the summer of 1978.

About 40% of medical and business libraries responding had purchased the Fifth Edition. Eleven of the 27 medical libraries (41%), and 7 of the 23 business libraries (30%), reported having no editions of CULP; the remainder used, for the most part, the Third or earlier editions, published by the California State Library before CLASS was formed. Business libraries indicated that they had declined to purchase the latest edition because they thought that the content would not be much different (26%) or because they used other serials lists (26%). A major reason for medical libraries declining to purchase CULP is that many (37%) do not have a microfiche reader.

From 50 to 60% of the other types of libraries have purchased the Fifth Edition. Sci-tech libraries also used the Fourth Edition (22%) and the earlier editions (21%); 8% did not have any edition of CULP. About the same was true for community colleges and other special libraries. Academic libraries tended to use the Fourth Edition if they had not purchased the Fifth, but few held on to earlier editions.

Conclusions About CULP Market Penetration

The two largest market segments for CULP are the public libraries and sci-tech libraries. Although the proportion of public libraries having the Fifth Edition is gratifyingly high, it is likely that the proportion of purchasers in that segment will fall back to about the 60% level for the Sixth Edition because there will be no Finding List Project subsidy. The proportion of sci-tech libraries buying the Fifth Edition seems somewhat low, probably because many of these libraries do not realize how greatly CULP has changed since the Third and Fourth editions. CLASS needs to stress this point in publicizing the Sixth Edition to sci-tech libraries.

A number of the medical libraries that don't have microfiche readers do have computer terminals. Although they are not a market for the fiche version of CULP, they are potentially users of the online version. They might also be interested in a medical library group list selected from the CULP file and provided in printed form.

No fully comparable question was asked in the 1978 survey, and we are unable to determine if there has been any change in the proportion of libraries purchasing the most recent edition of CULP since then.

QUESTION 2: Where do you keep your latest edition of CULP?

Responses to this question fell into two clusters. 85-90% of community college, other special, and academic-undergraduate libraries keep CULP in a public service area (reference desk, etc.) or (in a few cases) on display for public use. 50-68% of the other types of libraries did so, as opposed to keeping CULP in a "back room" for (mostly) staff use. There appeared to be no correlation between the location of CULP and the amount of use it enjoyed. Nevertheless, judging from several comments offered by respondents, and the thought that "out of sight is out of mind," we suspect that both library users and staff would benefit if CULP were publicized more widely and frequently in each library.

Compared to the 1978 survey, there is about a 15-point increase in the proportion of libraries keeping CULP in a public service area, except for public libraries which decreased from 70% in 1978 to 63% in 1980.

QUESTION 3: If you have not acquired the latest edition of CULP, please indicate why.

Libraries not purchasing the latest edition of CULP responded that it costs too much, is unlikely to be different enough from previous editions, and that the libraries use other serials lists. Community colleges and medical libraries tended to meet their ILL needs for serials through a library system or network. Community college, law, and a few smaller public libraries also indicated that their users make very few requests for serials materials not in the library's own collection.

There is probably an irreducible minimum number of libraries in each segment that will not ever make use of a relatively large union list of serials such as CULP is. Many of the other non-purchasers, however, might reconsider their decision if, as suggested above, CULP publicity emphasized the value of having current holdings data and the libraries were able to be included in a printed selected list drawn from CULP. In fact, as shown in responses to the question about what other union lists of serials they use, many of the Fifth Edition non-purchasers use a CULP-allied list that is printed in hard copy from a subset of the CULP file or that is fed into CULP to update it.

Oddly enough, several libraries that make very high use of CULP did not purchase the latest edition. (One, in fact, was still relying on the Third Edition!) A strange correlation was noted wherein many non-purchasers indicated that currency of CULP data should be a high priority.

In comparison to the 1978 survey, few respondents indicated this time that they had failed to purchase the latest edition because they didn't know it was available. This result indicates that CLASS has succeeded over the past two years in informing the library community about the availability of new CULP editions. Price continues to be a significant factor (although less so than in 1978) limiting the acquisition of new editions of CULP. The 1980 survey data reveal that there has been a significant reduction in the number of libraries, especially in the sci-tech segment, retaining the erroneous impression that CULP does not change very much from edition to edition. In 1978, 40% of the sci-tech libraries indicated that as a reason for not purchasing the Fourth Edition of CULP, whereas in 1980 only 14% checked this reason.

QUESTION 4: What do you use CULP for?

Except for medical (56%) and business (70%) libraries, 82 to 93% of all types of libraries use CULP for interlibrary loan. Although relatively few reported using CULP as a periodical selection or deselection tool (0-17%), this facet of potential use had not been publicized before the survey itself. Judging from several comments from respondents, some libraries may start using CULP for these purposes.

70% of the public libraries use CULP as a reference tool, closely followed at 53-64% by the other types of libraries except sci-tech (41%), law (33%) and medical (15%). Lower use of CULP as a reference tool may be related to generally less importance accorded to the reference function in those libraries.

No comparable question was asked in the 1978 survey.

QUESTION 5: How frequently is CULP consulted by patrons and/or librarians in your library?

Public and sci-tech libraries proved to be heavy users of CULP, with academic-graduate, community colleges, and business libraries following at a lower level. Law and medical libraries made relatively low use of CULP. The following table illustrates the differences in usage patterns among the types of libraries:

| Frequency | Public | SciTech | Com Col | Ac-Grad | Ac-Undg | Medical | Busins | Other Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10+/day | 5% | 3% | 2% | 11% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5% |
| 4-9/day | 16% | 9% | 0 | 7% | 0 | 4% | 9% | 0 |
| 1-3/day | 17% | 21% | 5% | 7% | 6% | 4% | 17% | 14% |
| 2-4/wk | 24% | 26% | 11% | 39% | 24% | 11% | 26% | 23% |
| 1/wk | 12% | 10% | 27% | 3% | 12% | 11% | 9% | 5% |
| 2-3/mo | 13% | 10% | 27% | 16% | 29% | 7% | 9% | 27% |
| 1-/mo | 12% | 12% | 24% | 7% | 29% | 26% | 0 | 17% |
| No CULP | 1% | 9% | 4% | 10% | 0 | 41% | 30% | 14% |

High and low users of CULP in the public, sci-tech, academic-graduate and community college types of libraries were analyzed further by comparing them on the factors of: size, location, use of other lists, which edition of CULP they used, and whether CULP was kept in a public service area on in a "back room." There was a definite correlation among public and sci-tech libraries between library size and amount of CULP use. Libraries using CULP 2-3 times per month or less tended to be small or medium in size, while libraries using CULP 4 or more times per day tended to be large or medium sized. There was weak correlation on the size factor among academic libraries, and among community colleges all the low users of CULP were medium or large libraries.

In terms of location, high users in the academic and sci-tech libraries tended to be in northern California urban locations, whereas the high public library users tended to be in southern urban locations. Low users tended to split equally between north and south for public and sci-tech libraries. Low user academic libraries tended to be located somewhere other than the northern urban area. Community college low users were not clustered in any particular location.

Among public libraries, high users tended either to rely almost solely upon CULP or to have a relatively large set of access tools. Low users tended to have no lists other than CULP or a few lists produced by neighboring libraries. Among sci-tech libraries, heavy users tended to rely on CULP and one other list, whereas low users tended to work with 5 or more lists. It is possible that the low users fail to appreciate just how wide a coverage CULP offers. Or, it may be that their needs are so specialized that they have no alternative but to use a large number of specialized lists. Academic libraries making low use of CULP tended to use 2 or 3 other lists, frequently from neighboring large universities. The same is true for community colleges, except that several used 5 or more lists.

Among sci-tech libraries, high users tended to have the Fifth Edition of CULP whereas low users tended to have an earlier edition. The same was true for academic libraries. The one community college high user relied upon the Fourth Edition, while the low users tended to have the Fifth Edition.

All high user libraries had CULP located in a public service area. Except among public libraries, where several low users kept CULP in a "back room," low users also had CULP in a public area.

In comparing the 1980 and 1978 surveys, there has been a very significant increase reported in the frequency of use for CULP in all types of libraries except medical libraries:

| Library Type | Proportion of Libraries Using CULP at least 1/wk 1978 Survey | 1980 Survey |
|---|---|---|
| Public | 49% | 72% |
| Sci-Tech | 53% | 73% |
| Community College | 28% | 45% |
| Academic | 38% | 55% |
| Misc. Special | 45% | 50% |
| Medical | 53% | 30% |

QUESTION 6: Would you be interested in having CULP available on microfilm or as a searchable online file?

Very few respondents indicated any interest in a microfilm version of CULP. Several of those that did added their opinion that the benefit of having CULP on a motorized film reader would be outweighed by the additional cost.

Between 40 and 50% of sci-tech, academic-graduate, and business library respondents indicated interest in having CULP available for online searching. 25-35% of public, medical and academic-undergraduate libraries were interested. From their comments upon this question, it is clear that not all respondents currently had an online reference capability or could afford the cost of searching CULP online. Nevertheless, this affirmative response very well supports the worth of proceeding with our experimental project to offer CULP online in the near future.

QUESTION 7: What do you think should be given the highest or lowest priority for improving CULP?

In general, libraries marked as high priority the maintenance of currency in CULP data (35-54%) and the correction of errors (24-48%). Almost no libraries marked these functions as having low priority. The bulk of the CLASS CULP staff is addressed to carrying out these two functions, and it appears that this allocation of resources correctly matches the priorities of CULP users.

Law (4 out of 6) and academic libraries (about 50%) would like to see the number of like libraries in CULP expanded. However, the number of law library users and the very low amount of use they make of CULP suggest that expansion in this area should be accorded low priority. CALLS (California Academic Library List of Serials) is more appropriate than CULP for covering at least the larger academic libraries. CLASS

distributes CALLS, and should focus marketing efforts for this publication on the academic library segment to ensure that those libraries are made aware that CULP and CALLS are complementary.

Medical and sci-tech libraries (37%) also indicated that they would find it useful to have the number of like libraries in CULP expanded. In view of the fact that sci-tech libraries represent the second most important segment of CULP users in terms of number and of frequency of use, this indicates that expansion of special library holdings in CULP should be accorded high priority. Larger public libraries similarly expressed interest in having access to more special library holdings.

A very few libraries (0-9%) marked the addition of cross references to CULP as being of high priority. Many more (13-40%) indicated that cross references should take low priority. This represents a very significant change from the 1978 survey, when the addition of cross references was given high priority by 13 to 20% of the respondents, and low priority by only 7 to 17%. We suspect that this change is evidence of the great improvement in the quality of CULP title information thanks to CLASS staff efforts to add cross references and the increased reporting from contributors that took place between the publication dates of the Fourth and Fifth Editions.

Relatively few libraries (3-13%) indicated that incorporation of additional titles in CULP should be given high priority. About the same proportion of the respondents specifically indicated that this should be given low priority.

Public, sci-tech, and academic-graduate level libraries evidenced more interest than the others in having CULP published more frequently, but at 10-15% this interest was relatively weak.

The responses of public, sci-tech, and academic libraries to these questions on the 1980 survey varied significantly from the results of the 1978 survey; those of community college libraries did not. The proportion of public and sci-tech libraries indicating that priority should be given to improving the currency of information and reducing errors almost doubled from 1978 to 1980. Public and academic libraries were 50% more likely in the 1980 survey to place a high priority on the addition of more libraries' holdings to CULP than was the case in 1978. The reasons for these differences are not obvious. In point of fact, the currency of information in CULP has increased enormously, and a great number of errors have been located and corrected. Users of the Fifth Edition of CULP have reported extremely few errors. It may be that users are reacting to this improvement, or to their greater reliance upon CULP as indicated by the huge increase reported in its use, by emphasizing the importance to them of keeping CULP data correct and current.

QUESTION 8: What other union lists of serials does your library use?

CSUC publishes a union list of serials held by the 19 campuses in printed form. This union list proved to be especially popular among community

college (48%) and academic (36-42%) respondents. For the former, the CSUC list seems to act as a replacement for CULP, perhaps because it is printed rather than on microfiche. In the case of academic respondents, the CSUC list is a complement to CULP and CALLS (or vice versa). Public (24%) and sci-tech (15%) libraries also make some use of the CSUC list. In the 1978 survey, few respondents mentioned use of the CSUC list, indicating that in the intervening two years it has enjoyed much wider distribution than in the past.

As might be expected, CALLS is used most extensively by academic libraries (59% undergraduate level and 42% graduate level). The other types of libraries report some use of CALLS, from 25% for sci-tech libraries down to 14% for public and 9% for other special libraries. These estimates are undoubtedly on the high side because of the difficulty we had in separating responses indicating CALLS itself from other responses referring to a single University of California library's local serials list. The relatively low use of CALLS suggests the need for more publicity emphasizing how CULP and CALLS should be used as complementary tools to gain access to most California serials resources.

Responses to the survey indicate that two public library system union lists, CAL/49-99 and SFPL/PLS, are used by a number of libraries of almost all types. The CAL/49-99 list draws holdings from the San Joaquin Valley region, and is especially rich in medical library holdings. The SFPL/PLS list displays the holdings of San Francisco Public and the public libraries of San Mateo County on the Peninsula. Both lists are used as sources of input to CULP; for the Sixth Edition, the inputs have been received in machine-readable form.

CULP itself is used as a source to generate selected lists in printed form showing the holdings of a group of libraries, such as special libraries in the Bay Area or the libraries in the BALIS (Alameda and Contra Costa counties) cooperative public library system. Five of these lists have been produced over the past two years, and three more are currently in production. Business and public libraries indicated a relatively high reliance upon these CULP-derived lists, while the other types of libraries mentioned them less frequently. It is evident that these lists make a significant contribution to the improvement of access to serials, and especially so for those libraries having the requirement for serials location information in printed form.

Except in academic libraries (23-29%), New Serials Titles was little used (0-14%). The CASSI (chemical titles) and Linda Hall lists were used by sci-tech and business libraries, but by only one public library. Union lists of neighboring states (ORULS for Oregon and IMULS for Nevada and Arizona) were used by respondents from those states, but were used by only two (academic) libraries in California. Little use of OCLC or RLIN was reported for locating serials, except in the case of academic-undergraduate (24%) and academic-graduate (10%) libraries.

QUESTION 9: Do you use RLIN, OCLC or other utility for serials/periodicals cataloging?

Except for academic libraries (42% OCLC and 19% RLIN), very few respondents reported using the utilities to catalog serials. This is not surprising in view of the fact that most libraries do not catalog serials.

MISCELLANEOUS PERCEPTIONS

Public Libraries

A number of respondents making little use of CULP placed a high priority on currency and more frequent publication. A few respondents indicated that local ILL policies require them to refer requests for periodicals information to the system level rather than allowing them to make requests directly to another library.

State library agencies in neighboring states except Nevada make very little use of CULP. However, the Pacific Northwest Bibliographic Center, which handles ILL requests that cannot be filled in-state in that region, does use CULP at the rate of 4 to 9 times per day. In Arizona, one major public library prefers CULP while another prefers IMULS (Inter-Mountain Union List of Serials); Oregon libraries prefer ORULS (Oregon Union List of Serials).

Academic-Graduate

One reason for the relatively high use these libraries make of CULP may be the wealth of holdings information for special libraries. Several respondents placed high priority on increasing the number of special medical libraries represented in CULP.

Sci-Tech and Business

There appears to be a lack of understanding of how complete the CULP coverage is for California libraries of these types. As with public libraries, there was also a strange correlation in these groups between the low use of CULP, or use of an outdated edition, and the placing of a high priority on currency of information. In these groups, as in some of the others, there is a tendency to hang onto outdated editions of CULP. Sometimes these are handed down from the ILL section to other departments, such as reference.

Community Colleges

Several respondents having older editions of CULP complained about the accuracy and utility of the information.

## CONCLUSIONS

From CLASS's point of view, the Fifth Edition of CULP marked a vast improvement in quality over previous editions, thanks to the large number of contributors who took the time necessary to provide updated holdings information. (This improvement has continued unabated, and should be even more apparent in the Sixth Edition which will be published soon.) Whether for this reason, or for others (greater demand for ILL since Proposition 13, or greater publicity for CULP because of CLASS advertising efforts), the 1980 CULP user survey indicates that this resource sharing tool is enjoying a very impressive increase in use.

From the data collected in the 1978 survey, we estimated (through extrapolation of the responses) that CULP was being used about 63,000 times per year. The 1980 survey indicates that usage has almost quadrupled -- to 246,000 times per year -- and that does not include any estimate of the number of times the printed selected lists derived from CULP are used!

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Currently, more than 600 libraries contribute holdings information to CULP. CLASS staff greatly appreciates the amount of time and effort spent by contributors to update their holdings information so that a high standard for currency and accuracy can be maintained for CULP.

The CLASS staff responsible for CULP are: Dianne Ellsworth, Program Manager; Edward Newman, Computer Services Program Manager; Edna Silverman, CULP Coordinator; Jane Leitner and Elizabeth Cooney, Programmers; Christine Emmerling, Data Entry Supervisor; Sharon Yogi and Carole Cohen, Editorial Assistants; and Steve Cohen, Bernice Hall, Rachel Litzinger, Bertha Meeks, Steve Mitsunaga, Parvin Farshchian, Virginia Toy, and Tommy Yamamoto, Data Entry Clerks. They all have put their best efforts into making CULP the useful access tool that this survey proves it to be.